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Dianne Wampler 01/09/2007 09:40:43 PM From DB/Inbox: Dianne Wampler

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UNCLAS SENSITIVE ANKARA 00026

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 000026

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: 2006 DECA INSPECTION DEMONSTRATES PROGRESS
ON BOTH US AND TURKISH ISSUES

1.(SBU) SUMMARY: The annual Turkish General Staff (TGS) inspection of US basing facilities made progress in resolving outstanding issues at the 425th Air Base Group (ABG) in Izmir and at the 39th Air Base Wing at Incirlik Air Base. It also identified two new issues - the move of the 425th ABG off the Bayrakli Compound once its lease ends and the turnover agreement for the Yumurtalik Sea Terminal. In sharp contrast to the past few years, TGS set aside time and provided experts to discuss specific USG concerns. It also went to great lengths in the closing brief to highlight US responsiveness to Turkish concerns. While some outstanding issues, such as the employment of US dependents, were left unresolved, others such as the APO system were not raised and there appeared to be a concerted effort by TGS to resolve all issues amicably. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) As required under the bilateral Defense Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA), TGS J-5 Agreements Division Chief MajGen Sefer Ozturk led an inter-agency team of TGS, Turkish Air Force, Foreign Ministry, Customs, Labor and Environment and Forestry representatives to conduct an inspection from December 4-8 of the 425th Air Base Group facility at Bayrakli Park and Cigli Air Base in Izmir and the 39th ABW at Incirlik Air Base outside of Adana. This was General Ozturk's third and last DECA inspection before his anticipated 2007 retirement. As he had done during the past two years, the General called the visit an opportunity to work together to solve basing issues, none of which he viewed as significant, and urged a cooperative approach by both sides.

EMPHASIZING US CONTRIBUTIONS IN IZMIR

13. (SBU) At Cigli Air Base, the 425th ABG provided briefings at every facility where the US had made improvements, detailing the extensive renovations and upgrades to sole and joint-use facilities paid for by the annual \$1M Cigli support fund that is part of the Cigli Air Base turnover agreement. The Turkish delegation appeared impressed by the extensive USG contributions and the good working relationship at the facility. They expressed appreciation for the quick US action to switch from armed to unarmed roving guards and to hire a private Turkish security firm to guard the Bayrakli compound entrances, resolving two major issues raised during the 2005 inspection.

14. (SBU) The 425th ABG, which supports US troops at NATO's Component Command (CC) Air Izmir and US military operations in Eskisehir, Istanbul and Ankara, is located on a privately-leased compound in Bayrakli Park, Izmir. The current lease ends in 2008 and will likely not be renewed. The 425th ABG understands that the owner has initiated development of land adjacent to the base compound and may also wish to develop the land occupied by the base. In anticipation, the 425th has inquired whether a streamlined base command could be accommodated on the NATO CC Air Izmir compound. That compound is a secure facility. Re-location there would allow the 425th ABG to reduce its security force as well as some administrative staff. A review is underway.

US CONCERNS AT INCIRLIK TAKEN SERIOUSLY

15. (SBU) The most notable change in the inspection of the 39th Air Base Wing (ABW) at Incirlik Air Base was TGS agreement to devote experts to an in-depth discussion of US issues, including requests for:

- Agreement on the list of what constitutes a "Major Item of Equipment" with respect to US military imports into Turkey: The list has grown from a handful of items to over one thousand items in recent years. TGS agreed to meet with ODC in January 2007 to review the list.
- Waivers of customs inspections on Cargo Hub cargo: During the April 2005 negotiations on establishing a Cargo Hub at Incirlik, TGS made no mention of the requirement for Hub cargo to undergo a Customs inspection. However, subsequent to initiation of Hub operations, Customs notified the 39th ABW of the inspection requirement and requested US payment of overtime fees for one Customs officer to ensure 24-hour coverage. ODC notified the 39th ABW to ask Customs to send an official request for payment via an MFA diplomatic note. To date, the Embassy has not received such a request. In 2006, Customs added a request for US payment of Customs official transport to and from the Base. During the inspection, ODC inquired whether such customs inspections for unopened cargo are required. The Customs Ministry official stated that Customs does have the authority to check all cargo transiting Turkey but that it typically does not exercise this authority except in cases of suspicious cargo.
- Approval to bring in replacement parts for cargo hub aircraft through the cargo hub: During the inspection, ODC requested TGS and Customs approval to utilize the cargo hub to bring in replacement parts for aircraft serving the cargo hub. The Customs Ministry official approved the import of parts for C-17s assigned to the Cargo Hub at Incirlik together with Hub cargo. TGS is still staffing this request and will likely only allow parts for C-17s to enter Incirlik without a Turkish Defense Approval (TDA). Note: A TDA is required for import and export of equipment and is the official document required for the waiver of customs fees.
- Waiver of customs fees on replacement air craft parts for non-cargo hub aircraft: In spring 2006, a USG-contracted plane broke down at Incirlik. The contractor sent a replacement engine which was held by Customs in Istanbul for weeks. During concerted negotiations by the contractor and the Embassy, the engine accrued hundreds of dollars in Customs storage fees. During the inspection this issue was

raised with the Customs Ministry official, who agreed that parts for aircraft approved to use Incirlik Air Base should not be subject to customs fees.

- Elimination of the requirement to complete a declaration (beyanname) form for the import of certain electronic items into Turkey: According to ODC, Turkey is the only NATO country with this requirement. At the inspections, the Customs official said the beyanname requirement was codified in Turkish law. He added, however, that Turkish law can be superseded by international agreements to which Turkey is a party. Customs asked for information on the requirements for Italy and Belgium. If those and other NATO countries do not require such a declaration, Turkey will review the NATO SOFA and other international agreements for wording that would override the Turkish requirement. ODC will request a letter from the NATO Legal Department confirming that no other NATO country requires such a declaration.

- Streamlining of the design approval process for 39th ABW engineering projects: TGS requires initial and follow-up design approval for construction projects at Incirlik. The requirement for multiple reviews is administratively onerous and slows down the construction process. During the inspection, ODC requested a single design approval. TGS agreed to meet in 2nd Qtr. 2007 to discuss.

- Elimination of requirement for USG contractors to pay a rental fee for space on 39th ABW facilities: TGS has begun to require all USG contractors, from vendors to doctors, to pay rent for the space they utilize on the 39th ABW facility. ODC argues that this amounts to a charge on the US government as the contractors add this fee to what they bill the US. Following discussion with MajGen Sutton during the inspection, MG Ozturk pledged to review the issue to determine what, if anything, could be done for different categories of contractors.

TURNOVER OF YUMURTALIK SEA PORT

¶16. (SBU) Turnover of the Yumurtalik Sea Port was the most significant issue raised during the Incirlik inspection. During its inbrief for MG Ozturk at the start of the base inspection, the 10th Tanker Base stated that the Yumurtalik facility caused serious environmental damaged that must be remediated or that steps should be taken to return the area to its original state in preparation for possible use as a military recreation site. The US delegation from Ankara was uninvited to a planned joint tour of the facility but the 39th ABW Commander did accompany the Turkish delegation. Despite expectations that TGS would request significant USG action to remediate the site, only two issues were listed in the inspection outbrief:

- Tank Damage: TGS will determine whether the existing problems must be repaired or if the facility can be turned over "as is."

- Facility Maintenance: TGS requests USG oversight of the facility during the interim between the departure of USG personnel and the removal of USG equipment and TGS assumption of responsibility for the facility following signature of a Turnover Agreement.

¶17. (SBU) TGS action to transform the site may be impacted by an ongoing lawsuit between the Turkish government and the owner of private land immediately adjacent to the facility on which the military built a small R&R site and guard quarters to provide security to the Yumurtalik facility.

HANGOVER ISSUES

¶18. (SBU) Dependent Hires: The primary outstanding issue from 2005 was the complaint by the Labor Ministry that the 39th ABW does not provide a list of specific jobs for which it would like to hire US dependents and is not applying for work permits for US dependent hires in accordance with Turkish law. At the 2005 DECA, ODC offered to meet to discuss this

issue but the MFA notified the Embassy that the Turkish side could not come to an agreed-upon position and therefore preferred not to meet. At the 2006 inspection, the Turkish delegation reiterated a request for this information for the record but did not press the issue.

¶9. (SBU) APO Agreement: As in 2005, the Turkish side did not raise the lack of an APO agreement. Following the 2004 DECA inspection when this issue was discussed in detail, we provided TGS and the MFA with copies of APO agreements we have with several western European countries for consideration as a model for a US/TU agreement. The Turkish side has not yet responded. As with the dependent hire issue, the MFA stated that it has not been able to get all affected agencies to agree on a common position.

THE NON-DECA ISSUE THAT STOLE THE SHOW

¶10. (SBU) Chapels located on the Bayrakli compound in Izmir and on the 39th ABW at Incirlik displayed a National Geographic historical maps of the Holy Land which contain an area labeled "Kurdistan." During the Bayrakli tour, a member of the Turkish delegation complained about the map and it was immediately removed. Tipped off that a similar map was hung in the Incirlik chapel, the Turkish delegation requested a tour of that chapel, but did not reveal that they were looking for a map. Once they found it hanging in the office suite, they complained about the use of such a map in a facility located on a Turkish military base. The Chaplain immediately removed the map. Rather than resolving the issue, however, the map's removal raised suspicions among the Turkish delegation that the US would take the map down only for the duration of the inspection, or worse, was hiding it so that no one else would complain, and then would hang it up once the TGS and MFA inspectors returned to Ankara.

¶11. (SBU) Upon learning of the rationale behind the request to tour the Incirlik chapel, the US delegation emphasized that the map is not a DECA issue and should not be reflected in the inspection summary, noted our receptivity to an open discussion with our counterparts on the issue and urged TGS to be forthright with the US about such concerns in the future. TGS did not include the map issue in its own summary of DECA issues.

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